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DE RUEHBS #2687/01 2361213

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FM USEU BRUSSELS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 002687

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/24/2017

TAGS: PREL NATO FUN KV RU TU

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE PRESIDENCY: GIVE US TIME ON KOSOVO,  
ADDRESS TURKEY/ESDP, KEEP RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA FROM  
DETERIORATING

Classified By: CDA CHRIS MURRAY FOR REASONS 1.5 (B AND D).

SUMMARY

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¶1. (C) Portuguese Political and Security (PSC) Ambassador Pais told Charge August 23 that the EU will only address recognition and next steps on Kosovo as the December 10 report deadline moves closer. Pais floated a "hot house" Dayton-like conference as a possible way to pressure the Kosovars and Serbs to negotiate in good faith. Pais stressed that the EU is attempting to meet some of Turkey's concerns regarding ESDP by consulting with Ankara on the likely ESDP mission in eastern Chad. He noted that Lisbon wants to use the EU-Russia Summit to prevent relations with Moscow from deteriorating further. Pais expects no problems with the Inter-governmental Conference on the EU Reform Treaty. END SUMMARY

KOSOVO: GIVE EU TIME

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¶2. (C) Charge and Acting Pol Chief met Portuguese PSC Ambassador Carlos Pais and his deputy, Luis Ramos, August 23 to review the Portuguese Presidency's priorities. Asked about Kosovo, Pais reasoned that EU member states may need more time -- "a matter of weeks, not months" -- after the Troika's report to the UNSYG to determine how to proceed, including on the ESDP Rule of Law Mission. According to Pais, many member states are increasingly recognizing the reality that Kosovo will declare independence some time after December 10. The key for the EU is to develop a consensus whereby a member state(s) does not block the ESDP mission. That said, some member states continue to view a UNSCR as a sine qua non for such a mission. We questioned the likelihood of a Russian abstention after December 10 given Russia's approach in New York over the past several months.

¶3. (C) Pais agreed that the chances of a negotiated solution resulting from the 120-period were slim. He raised the possibility of a Dayton-like "hot house" conference, bringing the parties together in a relatively isolated environment for a last-ditch effort to reach a solution. We noted that 13 months of Ahtisaari's efforts had produced little genuine compromise from the Serbs, adding that such a conference might not work at such a late stage.

TURKEY: EU WILL CONSULT ON ESDP

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¶4. (C) Turning to Turkey, Pais said the EU will use the September 18 Political Directors' Troika with the Turks to consult about plans for the proposed ESDP Mission in eastern Chad. The EU hopes this will demonstrate to Ankara that the EU has taken note of Turkey's complaint regarding the lack of prior consultation on ESDP missions. Various EU member states have not yet, however, decided how to respond to PM

Erdogan's letter outlining several of Turkey's other complaints regarding its "treatment" by the EU. No one, he added, has yet proposed a creative and viable solution to the apparent impasse regarding Turkey and the ESDP Missions in Afghanistan and (possibly) Kosovo. With the Turkish general election now completed, Ankara may be more forthcoming. That said, he noted upcoming elections in EU member states (Greece in September, Cyprus next spring) that might also be (unspecified) factors affecting EU ties with Turkey.

RUSSIA: KEEP RELATIONS FROM DETERIORATING

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¶15. (C) Asked about the EU-Russia Summit set for October 26, Pais acknowledged that few expect any concrete results. Portugal's main aim is to use the summit to try to prevent EU-Russian relations from deteriorating further. Pais opined that the missile incident in Georgia is yet another disturbing manifestation of opaque Russian actions.

HOPE TO WRAP UP IGC IN OCTOBER

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¶16. (C) Charge raised Portuguese expectations regarding the Inter-governmental Conference on the draft Reform (previously the "Constitutional") Treaty. Pais said Lisbon hopes to be able to wrap up the work in October. Given Polish preoccupation with early elections and with no indication from PM Brown that a referendum would be held in the UK, there should not be any major impediments to finalizing the treaty for ratification, he added.

EU-AFRICA SUMMIT

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¶17. (C) We asked about internal EU deliberations on whether to invite Mugabe to the EU-Africa Summit in December given the UK's concerns and reiterated our opposition to such an invitation. Pais stressed that the invitation would be to the AU and that Portugal preferred to concentrate at this stage on substantive preparations.

COMMENT

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¶18. (C) Pais has been in Brussels for just eight months and his thoughts on most issues were somewhat thin. His comments are another indication that the Portuguese Presidency will not be a driving force in forging an EU consensus on Kosovo, at least probably not before December ¶10. On Russia, too, the Portuguese Presidency appears to be in a holding pattern -- trying to keep relations from getting worse but without strategizing on how to achieve this. On Turkey, the Portuguese would like to take positive steps but new ideas are in short supply.

MURRAY

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